Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XXI. OCTOBER, 1912. No. 5

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY, EXCEPT AUGUST: 50 cents a year.
Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

CONTENTS FOR NO. 5.

IMMORTAL 49
THREE KINDLING THOUGHTS 49
THE STILL HOUR 51
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 52
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL:—
INTERRUPTING 52
THE BIRDS' "CONEY ISLAND" 53
NOBLE LIVES, VII.:—
OCTAVIA HILL 55
PETER 56
THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN 59
THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 60
IMPORTANT NOTICES 60

IMMORTAL.

Into the heaven of thy heart, O God,
I lift up my life like a flower;
Thy life is deep, and thy love is broad,
And I am not thy child of an hour.

As a little blossom is fed from the whole
Vast depth of unfathomed air,
Through every fibre of thought my soul
Reaches forth, in thyself to share.

I dare to say unto thee, my God,
Who hast made me to climb so high,
That I shall not crumble away with the clod;
I am thine and cannot die!

The throb of thy infinite life I feel
In every beat of my heart;
Upon me hast thou set eternity's seal,
For ever alive, as thou art.

I know not thy mystery, O my God,
Nor yet what my own life means,
That feels after thee, through the mould and the sod,
And the darkness that intervenes.

But I know that I live, since I hate the wrong,
The glory of truth can see,
Can cling to the right with a purpose strong,
Can love and can will with thee.

And I feel thee through other lives, my God,
That in thyself have grown,
And are filled with the sweetness of thine abode,
With the light that is all thine own.

Because I have known the human heart
And its heavenly tenderness,
I am sure that thou with thy children art;
They bless me as thou dost bless.

Shall I doubt thy breath, which I breathe, my God,
Shall I reason myself into dust?
Thy word flows fresh through the earth abroad;
My soul unto thee I trust.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

THREE KINDLING THOUGHTS.

How seldom one says on any given occasion just what he wishes to say beforehand! Friends meet after a long absence, ideas and words fail, and blankness settles over the joyfully anticipated meeting. A friend passes on, and we more readily recall some almost absurd trifle of talk or useful practical advice than high discourse or spiritual vision. About to separate for time, one to face the great mystery, the other the changed world, silence settles on the parting, and the good-bye is in tears, not words. In public few say just what or all they mean to say, though, to my mind, a deal more is said than is wise. In the effort to be exhaustive, we fail to be suggestive, and are simply exhausting. We are not heard for our much speaking, but by the magnetism of earnestness, the spell of sympathy, and the charm of simplicity, "simplicity being the seal of the truth."

Still to the end of the chapter we shall try to interest others in what we deeply feel. Three kindling thoughts have lately impressed me with a startling weight of conviction. The first is, "There is nothing too hard to bear." Why did this thought not come sooner? Why must I wait till another spoke it? How much of life is lost in trying to push away hard trials instead

of manfully bearing them! "Often it seems as if the heart had come to the very end of hope, and that something must happen." How long, how long, *must* we bear? How long, how long, *can* we bear? How little we can do, hampered as we are by an outrageous temper or an infelicitous temperament! Slow we are to learn that "nothing so educates and uplifts the human soul as to see before it something that it dreads and yet accepts as a fact." Slow we are to learn that "life's higher success, as God regards it, is not measured by what we do, but by what we bear." But at last a great light breaks, and one sees, even in the supremest trials, the stronghold of religious faith shaken, the agony of temptation, and "the isolation of one's own heart, that is each man's tragedy," that nothing is too hard to bear, if the heart be stayed on God, who gives the moral exercise, and never leaves his child alone to bear it. There will always be "obstinate questionings, before which our mortal nature trembles." Man's first word is, "Yes," to the truths of religion as inculcated in youth; his second, "No," as honest doubts and questions arise; his third and last, "Yes," as the everlasting verities seal his heart with peace. "Above all, do not resent temptation, do not be perplexed because it seems to thicken round you more and more, and ceases neither for effort nor for agony nor prayer. That is your practice." Remember that in your pain God gives you the opportunity to bless, if your heart is not seared, but softened by it. He makes you his minister of grace to those haply more wretched than yourself. He may not mean you to rejoice: he does mean you to console.

My second kindling thought was suggested by Henry Drummond's fine tract, entitled "The Greatest Thing in the World." Not religiousness, but love. Perhaps he is right; for God is love, and to partake of his spirit is more precious than a correct belief about him. If one loves, he can live. As some one has beautifully said: "I shall pass through this world but once: any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." "What God *has* put in our power is the happiness of those about us, and that is largely to be secured by our being kind to them. . . . Love is energy of life. The final test of religion at that day is not religiousness, but love; not what I have done, not what I have achieved, but how I have discharged the common charities." But remember, what is sometimes now forgotten, that the love of God is the only sure foundation for the love of man.

My third kindling thought is, Begin to live at once. Waste no time in preparing to live. It was said of some friends of mine that they never seemed to be living, but always getting ready to live. They were immersed in bureau drawers. These furnish an innocent and fascinating amusement to the female mind. Indeed, I pity old men for not caring to turn over their possessions and for finding no solace in knitting,—woman's harmless tobacco. But, then, one can be too easily absorbed in trifles, and forget the preciousness of opportunity, the seriousness of life. And how adequately express our loss when we wait to be *fit* to do any good thing? One can never be fit. Yet we are all more or less guilty of this folly. Why is it that so many late, if ever, join the church? Mainly because they think they are not fit to do so. They are not good enough or they do not believe enough. But, if joining the church is seen to be a means, not an end, if one sincerely desire to give and gain good, if aspiration be the climate of the soul, scruples will vanish, if not till the eleventh hour, and faith and fitness will grow together. What deters many from Sunday-school teaching is the fear of not being fit, not believing enough, not knowing enough. So a few poor (no, rich) teachers are suffered to work without sympathy or aid for, perhaps, twenty years. Having thrown my scruples to the wind, knowing its discouragements from experience, still am I persuaded that it is the bounden duty of every man and woman in our churches sooner or later to try his or her hand at Sunday-school teaching, not feeling excused till, after a fair trial, they are convinced they have no vocation for it.

And, now, to recapitulate the three kindling thoughts which have been a comfort to me, and I trust will be to others. There is nothing too hard to bear. "Do you know," said Wesley, "why the cow looks over the wall?" "No," replied the one in trouble. Said Wesley, "Because she cannot look through it, and that is what you must do with your troubles: look over and above them." The second kindling thought is, Love is the greatest thing in the world. So, as Mrs. Chant finely said, "Let us never slay a kindly impulse in the heart by turning a deaf ear to its pleading." The third kindling thought is, Do not wait to be fit to do any good thing. Begin at once: you may not have but a day or an hour to fulfil

high resolves. Gather strength for your conflict from the following noble lines:—

"Endurance is the crowning quality,
And patience all the passion of great hearts;
One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind."

"Thine was a conflict none else knew but God,
Who gave thee to endure it strength divine;
Alone with him the wine-press thou hast trod,
And Death, his angel, seals the victory thine."

—*Elizabeth P. Channing.*

THE STILL HOUR.

CALLING THE ANGELS IN.

We mean to do it. Some day, some day,
We mean to slacken this feverish rush
That is wearing our very souls away,
And grant to our loaded souls a hush
That is only enough to let them hear
The footsteps of angels drawing near.

We mean to do it. Oh, never doubt,
When the burden of day-time broil is o'er,
We'll sit and muse while the stars come out,
As the patriarchs sat at the open door
Of their tents, with a heavenward-gazing eye
To watch for the angels passing by.

We've seen them afar at high noon tide,
When fiercely the world's hot flashing beat,
Yet never have bidden them turn aside,
And tarry awhile in converse sweet;
Nor prayed them to hallow the cheer we spread,
To drink of our wine and break our bread.

We promise our hearts that, when the stress
Of the life-work reaches the longed-for close,
When the weight that we groan with hinders less,
We'll loosen our thoughts to such repose
As banishes Care's disturbing din,
And then—we'll call the angels in.

The day that we dreamed of comes at length,
When, tired of every mocking quest,
And broken in spirit and shorn of strength,
We drop, indeed, at the door of rest,
And wait and watch as the day wanes on—
But the angels we meant to call are gone!

—*Selected.*

Whatsoever we ask which is not for our good, he will keep it back from us. And surely in this there is no less of love than in the granting what we desire as we ought.—*H. E. Manning.*

Dare to look up to God and say: "Make use of me for the future as thou wilt. I am of the same mind: I am one with thee. I refuse nothing which seems good to thee. Lead me whither thou wilt."—*Epictetus.*

Put faith in truth as mightier than error, prejudice, or passion, and be ready to take a place among its martyrs. Feel that truth is not a local, temporary influence, but immutable, everlasting, the same in all worlds, one with God and armed with his omnipotence. *Channing.*.

Not till we come to God ourselves, by personal submission to the law of right, personal trust in his all-sufficient love, do we have any solid Christianity. After that, if we speak, we speak what we know and testify what we have seen.

Ideas which never have been incorporated, never have been put in action, are as yet not vital. They do not tend to progress. But whenever an idea is acted out, whenever a great truth is really lived, it becomes a source of life to multitudes.

Christianity is not an abstract creed, a system of thought: it is not a philosophical system, it is the personal influence of a great soul.

The work of the gospel is to show us that Christ is "Immanuel," God with us; that heaven and hell are here; that Christ saves us only as he is a present Saviour; that immortality must begin now; that we must have eternal life abiding in us while in this world.

NOON, OF DAY AND OF LIFE.

O God, help me to lift my thoughts, if it be but a little way, out of the dust and smoke of life's endless battle. Let me forget for an hour my trivial cares and paltry hopes, and see all things, even the love and joy of this world, in the light of thine eternal calm.

Father, my whole existence is unworthy and imperfect. I am only half true to the law thou hast graven on my heart, half grateful or faithful to thee, my Lord. As I grow older, I cease to fall into the sins which beset mine youth, for they cease to tempt me; but I grow more engrossed with earthly interests, and less moved by the holy ambition to grow perfect as thou, my Father, art perfect. Even such repentance as I feel for my errors and shortcomings is cold and dull.

I see not so much where I fail, as that my whole life is a failure. Lighten thou mine eyes, O God. Help me, for I know not how to help myself. Pour some fresh stream of love into my heart. Change this twilight of indifference into the broad lights and deep shadows of vivid spiritual life, of fervent yearning for what is good and noble and holy, and bitter loathing for all things false and selfish and vile.—*Alone to the Alone.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests to be printed in this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 60 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

OFFERS.

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.:—

For Young People.

"Our Country's Story," "Children's Plutarch," "Fourth Heath Reader," Cyr's "Fourth Reader," Walton-Holmes "Arithmetics," "Glimpses of Nature," Blaisdell's "Story of American History," "History of Germany," "English and Latin Dictionary," "Home Ballads by our Home Poets," and Jan McMurry's "Geographies."

Miscellaneous.

"The Appeal to Life," Theodore T. Munger; "Life of Fanny Burney"; "Amenities of Home"; "A Night of Wonders"; Scott's "Poems"; "Tour of the World in Eighty Days," Jules Verne; "Colin Clout's Calendar"; "Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines"; "A Life for Liberty: Letters of Sallie Holley"; "Sketches by Boz"; "The Perfect Tribute"; "Poems by Celia Thaxter"; "The Piper," and "The Book of the Little Past," Josephine Preston Peabody.

Henry Angier Jenks, 45 Spring Lane, Canton, Mass., offers a copy of Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue for 1910.

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. M. E. Washington, Endicott, Virginia, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Delineator* for 1912.

2. Miss Natalia von Schenck, Fundicion de los Arcos, Toluca, Mexico, will be very glad to get some short stories which she can copy for the English-speaking blind. Miss Von Schenck has twenty-nine blind persons on her list, for whom she writes copies every month, using the Braille system. She writes and speaks German, French, Spanish, English, and Esperanto. Miss Von Schenck will be glad to return the books if desired. Allegorical stories, similar to "In the Desert of Waiting," by A. F. Johnston, are asked for by many of the blind.

3. Miss Dovie Rakes, Endicott, Virginia, Franklin County, will be glad of any reading.

4. Mrs. Bettie L. Joyce, Shuff, Virginia, having lost her seven-year-old son, asks for reading to help ease the loss.

5. Mrs. Mary Heckard, Toronto, Kansas, wishes to thank the person who sent her papers (no name given on the wrapper) and hopes to receive more.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

INTERRUPTING.

It is the "little foxes that spoil the vines," and it is the little faults that spoil the charm of a girl's manner. The fault of interrupting belongs to a person of quick, bright mind. Because her thought leaps to the conclusion of your sentence before your tongue can get out the words, she jumps into the middle of it and finishes it for you. Consequently, more than half the time she fails to get your idea at all. It becomes somewhat dangerous to talk with her, because she has drawn your conclusions for you, and may repeat them to others, after stamping them with your name.

The habit detracts largely from the pleasure that you can take in her friendship. It is sometimes amusing, but it is more often annoying, when you are relating an incident, and a listener gives it a wrong ending, or you are expressing a thought, and it is twisted by another beyond recognition. No really stupid person does this, for it is the result of quick thinking; therefore, bright girls should be on their guard. One young woman, otherwise well bred, unconsciously interrupts after this fashion to such an extent that a friend is seldom permitted to finish a sentence, and must patiently wait to correct the mistakes that result.

Another form of interrupting is distinctly selfish and discourteous. The listener is

paying little attention to what the other is saying, and is only anxious to get in her word, which may be on an entirely different subject. A good listener is usually charming, and a rule of good-breeding is to wait for the end of another's sentence before attempting to speak yourself.—*The Youth's Companion.*

THE BIRDS' "CONEY ISLAND."

In the days when the rosemary comes to the marshes, touching their olive browns with the misty melancholy of its sea lavender, come the shore birds, too. Both seem born out of the gray mists that midsummer sends in from the sea, when north and south winds meet in the offing and the gray is touched with thoughts of dawn. The quality of color which the sea lavender has among the brighter hues of the other flowers of summer is like the quality of tone which the voices of these lone travellers from the misty seas far north have among the land birds that dwell near. The two seem as near relatives as it is possible for flower and bird to be, and summer is kind to the marsh and all that seek it when it brings these together there. Just now both are at their best, and hundreds of level miles by bay and creek are a delight with their presence.

Too many guns and too long an open season have made many of our shore birds wofully scarce of late years, yet this summer, when I go to Clark's Pond, out Eagle Hill way in Ipswich, I begin to wonder if the latest restrictions, together with an awakening sense of responsibility among the hunters, have not brought us to the turn in the tide. To see plover and sandpipers of a dozen varieties by the thousand, terns of two or three varieties almost as numerous, all fraternizing in and about the same little pond, while bittern and young night herons stalk the shores, and seem to think a man watching them is all a part of the congregation, is more like what one reads of bird life a half-century ago than the usual meagre conditions of to-day. Yet any day you may see something like this at this little pond. With good luck you may see more.

BIRDS TO BE RECOGNIZED.

Not only are the birds exceedingly numerous in and about this little pond all day long, but they are very tame. Standing on the sand bar which separates its brackish shallows from the sea beach, one may have the semi-palmated sandpipers and ring-necked plover running almost about his feet, and the terns swirling so near that their wings almost fan him, while perhaps a bittern slumps himself down into the mud only a rod or two away, gazing with one yellow eye at the stranger, but in no wise afraid. The cause for all this is not far to seek. Clark's Pond is a haven of safety for shore birds. Its owner has fenced it in and allows no one to enter the enclosure. He has an elaborate stand there for shooting ducks and geese, but he does not shoot shore-birds himself nor will he allow others to on his pond. The birds know this, have known it for some years, and behave accordingly. Not only do they show little fear of man while within the enclosure, but they flock to it from near and far. Evidently the word has been passed.

Here the veriest tyro at bird gazing may find at least one bird which he will recognize on second view,—the semi-palmated plover which the gunners know as the ring-neck. Most people name the ring-neck just as Eve did the pig, knowing it could be nothing else. Here, too, the skilled ornithologist may watch, with some hope for success, for those birds which are now so shy and rare that they are not commonly seen, or plot out from the coming and going of the flocks some detail, perhaps, of the wondrous scheme of things which is their migratory flight. For of all wonderful things about birds the migratory flight of some of these little shore birds is most wonderful. Let us take, for instance, the ring-necks. Here are little seven-inch birds that come to the pond in flock after flock, day after day, in numbers that count rapidly into the thousands. Their little gray and white friends, the semi-palmated sandpipers, mingle with them on terms of the friendliest intimacy, and the individual vendettas which I find among the sandpipers never seem to extend to the larger birds. Two semi-palmated sandpipers will often dash about and pull feathers out of one another right under the bills of the semi-palmated plover without disturbing them in the least. Among these flocks one often sees a sandpiper or two, noticeably small and dark, and indeed almost any others of the small sandpipers and plover.

RETURNING FROM LONG JOURNEYS.

Yet for all their democratic friendliness with other birds, the ring-necks are among the greatest of travellers and should have a world knowledge that might tend to make them proud. They migrate from the arctic ice, which they leave behind them in July, often to far beyond the tropics and back again in time to rear their young in the far

north the next summer. This is their annual winter outing on which we see them now, and it will last until next spring. Nor is that quite all. The length of the world north and south is not always enough for them, and they join in those east and west movements of migrating birds which are even less understood by man than the ordinary fly lines. Very likely the gentle little ring-necks which I watch at Clark's Pond were bred in Eastern Siberia and have come to us across Behring Straits, the mountains of Alaska, and the vast plains of British America, only to make our beaches a way station on their way to Argentina.

The ring-necks are not the only shore birds that wander thus far on tiny wings. Of equally great range are the migrations of the turnstones, the sanderlings, knots, pectoral and white-rumped sandpipers,—all birds that one may meet of a day at this little refuge pond on the Ipswich shore. It is but one tiny spot, so small when compared with the great range of the birds as to be infinitesimal, yet sooner or later to it seem to come all beach and sea birds. Either its location is peculiarly convenient or its reputation for safety has travelled far. There is a street corner in London where they say if one will only wait long enough, he will see pass by any other man that he wants to see in the whole world. In the world of shore birds Clark's Pond seems like that.

The way to it is over a mile or two of marsh, among the salt creek and sea lavender. Then I like to climb a great hill that overlooks it from the south and get a bird's-eye view of what is going on. On the hill itself I am likely to flush the upland plover, known to the bookish as the Bartramian sandpiper,—a fine upstanding bird a foot long that comes up out of the grass as a grouse might, and, indeed, always suggests to me a game bird rather than the water bird that a plover surely is. All brown like a partridge, he looks as he flies, and he gets his food from the dry hillsides, grasshoppers, and other small insects, sometimes chasing them as a chicken does. Generations of gunners have taught the Bartramian sandpiper to be shy; and, as he does not feed near the water, he has not learned that in the pond is refuge. So he keeps dark in the grass until I am too near, as he thinks, for safety, then goes into the air with a rush.

ATTRACTION FOR THE SEA BIRDS.

Over the brow of the hill lies an enchanting view. A slope yellow with goldenrod and flecked clearer yellow again with toad-flax swings down to great masses of purple loosestrife. These margin the pond rod after rod, standing breast high in great groups, and again in single clumps that look like specimen plants in a well-kept garden. The long grass which would otherwise grow about these is kept down to a lawn-like shortness by a score or two of Canada geese which the owner of the pond keeps here. Barnyard bred as they are, these have every mark and habit of their wild progenitors. I fancy they give the pond the air of an arctic pool to the approaching sea birds. I know they do for the human visitor. Beyond the pond is the beach, and beyond that Plum Island, lying low in the sea that is so blue all about it, a wide sweep of free, wind-blown world, the sight of which is reward enough for the journey thither.

Yet no bird-lover, however enthusiastic a botanist or a worshipper of wide spaces, will linger long over this part of what he sees, for there in the pond at his feet is a far more wonderful sight. There may be five hundred white terns just swirling together below him and dropping on one of the little islands like a shower of confetti on a bride or falling petals in an apple orchard, whiter than any snow-squall that was ever seen. Alighting, they make the olive brown mud of the island all white. They go in the shallows off its side and cuddle down in the water and bathe. They fill the air with their cries, an unmusical tumult for such lovely birds. In the distance they all look alike, and so I found them one day recently. They were all the common tern, white with a black crown. But on another day I found a score or more of the least tern, somewhat smaller and the white forehead showing conspicuously. The older birds were fishing, often bringing a mouthful to the young ones waiting on the sand.

Here are keen-winged racing flyers who might well be expected to migrate from one end of the world to another, yet their fly lines do not begin to be so long as those of the little shore birds that cover the margins of the pond and its islands all about them. From the hillside these are so small in comparison that it is difficult to pick them out with the naked eye. One notes the geese, the gulls, the terns, then along the pond margin, standing like stumps, other brown birds. Sometimes one of these will not move for an hour. Then he may wade solemnly, or even duck and flutter in the water, bathing in poky fashion. One is apt to think these all bitterns, but on more careful inspection will agree that there are also young night herons there. The two at this time of year look and act singularly alike, though the

bittern is always the more dumpy and morose. Now and then one flaps laboriously into the air and perhaps laboriously circles the pond or goes off along shore for a trip. To see this, one would not think the bittern capable of long-sustained flight. The bird's migration is ordinarily a short one, from the Northern to the Southern States. Yet no doubt one flew once from America to England, for the first mention science makes of the bird is when, a hundred years ago, one was shot in England. The bitterns and night herons give to the scene a touch of grotesqueness which is an added delight.—*Winthrop Packard, in the Boston Transcript.*

(*To be continued.*)

NOBLE LIVES.

VII.

OCTAVIA HILL.

Octavia Hill was born in London, Dec. 3, 1838, the daughter of James and Caroline (Southwood) Hill. Dr. Southwood Smith, the pioneer of sanitary reform and a member of the first public body to erect model dwellings in London, was her grandfather. One of her sisters married Edmund Maurice, son of Frederick D. Maurice, and another married Charles Lewes, son of George Henry Lewes. Miranda, the third sister, earned a wide reputation as a philanthropic worker. She founded the Kyrle Society, the object of which was "to bring beauty to the homes of the poor"; was prominent in the Charity Organization Society and in the National Trust for preserving Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, and for many years did efficient work in poverty-stricken Marylebone as a member of the board of guardians.

The question of proper housing for the London poor was familiar to Octavia Hill in girlhood, when her grandfather, Dr. Smith, was taking a leading part in the sanitary reform crusade which followed the cholera scourge of 1832. She was early convinced that people are greatly influenced in their habits of life and ways of thought by their domestic surroundings, and she thought that sanitary science should be supplemented by improving the buildings—and their occupants. She joined a company of young women who labored among the poor of the city under the leadership of Frederick D. Maurice, the teacher and preacher who in 1850 organized the Tailors' Association, "to enable men to buy their coats without sinning against God," and four years later founded the Workingmen's College.

Miss Hill's acquaintance with John Ruskin began in 1864, when she commenced taking lessons of him in drawing. The thought of Ruskin at this time was turning toward social problems. In their ideals of philanthropy the pupil and the teacher were much alike, though they had arrived at common opinions by different roads. One day in a friendly chat Ruskin remarked on the dreariness of a life which has no object engaging the interest and demanding effort, and Miss Hill said, "Most of us feel like that at times." And to his question, "What would you like to be doing?" she responded, "Something to provide better homes for the poor." In their talks together Miss Hill was often able to give practical shape to Ruskin's notions of possible remedies for social ills. Finally she formulated a plan for dealing with the housing problem of the poor districts of London. Ruskin approved it and entered heart and soul into the project, supplying the money for making a start. In all he furnished £3,000 for the enterprise at 5 per cent. interest, giving also much of his time and considerable publicity.

The first step in the joint undertaking was the purchase of the fifty-six years' lease of three houses in Marylebone, near Miss Hill's home. A room in her own house was fitted up for receiving her tenants, and later, when a whole court had been acquired, for giving them entertainment. The three houses were thoroughly renovated. The tenants got two rooms for the amount previously paid for one. Miss Hill did away with the middleman, collecting the rent herself, and through her weekly calls for rent gaining her greatest hold on the people. After eighteen months of the experiment Miss Hill had returned £48 of the capital, was paying 5 per cent. interest, and was able to meet all current expenses, such as taxes, ground rent, and insurance. Shortly she found a surplus of money returns. A part was spent in repairs to buildings, and the remainder used for appliances which the tenants themselves desired. This encouraged the tenants to keep the houses in good repair. The people improved morally and physically, and the property paid. So satisfactory were the results that Ruskin bought six more tenements in the same district and turned the management over to Miss Hill. The houses were repaired and cleaned, the waste land was converted into a playground, where Ruskin had trees set out, and around the buildings creepers were planted. A woman

was employed to take charge of the playground and teach the children games. A fife and drum corps was organized among the boys.

THE WINNING OF THE PUBLIC.

The public by this time was finding out what Miss Hill was accomplishing. Confidence in her methods and business capacity increased. In 1867 eleven tenement houses were intrusted to her care by their owners, and from time to time other owners followed suit. Houses in the slums were bought for the especial purpose of intrusting their management to Miss Hill. In 1869 the Countess of Ducie gave her virtual possession of six ten-roomed tenement houses in Marylebone. Later the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who are public trustees, put the management of similar property into her hands. As the years went on, Miss Hill and her fellow-workers came to have charge of whole courts and streets in various parts of London—Marylebone, Lambeth, Westminster, Southwark. Her sense of responsibility was acute. Property placed in her hands became a good investment. And the moral improvement of her tenants was marked.

The story of the transformation of conditions in one group of tenement buildings in Marylebone shows something of her method. The inhabitants were mainly costermongers and hawkers, who were supposed to have sunk into the lowest degradation. The houses were indescribably filthy and neglected. Any man might have hesitated to go to this place at night to collect rent, for night was the only time when the tenants could be found at home. Miss Hill did not shrink, brave-hearted woman that she was. The improvement of the buildings was made gradually, as the people became more capable of appreciation. Tenants when out of work were employed to make repairs. The girls were paid to scrub the floors and passageways regularly. Soon rivalry arose among them as to which could keep her space the cleanest, and, cleanliness being infectious, the girls began to take more heed of personal appearance. Little by little general progress was made, and little by little Miss Hill got hold of the hearts of the people and was able to help them in the crises of their lives. But she never unduly interfered. She never entered a room unless invited. She never offered gifts or prizes. And Ruskin wrote, "She has partially moralized two acres of Marylebone."

As the scheme developed, Miss Hill gathered about her a band of volunteer workers, training them in the management of homes for the poor. They called her "General," and she disciplined her army to forego sensational victories. What was done was done by hard, practical work, based on knowledge and carried out on business lines. Her co-laborers became imbued with her own spirit. In an annual letter to them she set down their duties, with a record of donations and a report of the year's activities.

—*Raymond Fuller.*

(To be continued.)

PETER.

Peter was a fisherman, very humble and very poor. My acquaintance with him began near the seashore at the close of a poor fishing season and was in this wise:—

Three years ago, while on a vacation at Kennebunkport, Me., as I was carpentering one morning in my barn, something soft caressed my ankles. On looking down, I discovered a starving cat, whose thin sides scarcely covered his appealing ribs, and whose staggering steps betrayed his famished condition. The story was plain: here was a waif left over from the previous season by some cottager, and who had picked up a precarious living through the winter by catching a few fish from the creek as he was able.

Lifting in my arms the shrunken remnant of a cat, I carried him into the house, where my wife and I prudently ministered to his needs. For the first week he could not walk the length of the veranda without lying down in panting exhaustion; but toward the close of the season he picked up, and became a healthy and appreciative animal. Of course we took him to Tilton, N.H., when we returned to our home at the end of the season. He has given up fishing as an unprofitable occupation, and depends on tried friends for all his supplies.

His peculiar habits are interesting. Like most felines, he studies his personal comfort. The first night he was allowed to stay in the house he found his way to the foot of my bed, and coiled himself in purring content: he has been allowed ever since to sleep at the left corner, near the footboard, on a cloth spread for his accommodation.

He is quite social with us, often following my wife and myself when we go down town in the evening, sometimes turning three corners before he leaves us,—there are unfriendly dogs beyond,—when he dives into a garden hedge, and waits for our return. Two

hours later, perhaps, he comes out from the hedge with a little cry of gladness and pilots us to our front door.

He has learned the meaning of a few words associated with his simple needs. "Are you hungry?" is a question that is generally sure to arouse him from his evening meditations, and, if then asked, "Do you want some meat?" he starts for the kitchen where a corner of the floor by the sink is covered with a folded paper. His meat is usually placed on this paper, but he will take a portion from our fingers and carry it from any part of the room to his paper. He is quite particular to keep his food on his tablecloth, putting it back on the paper when it slips off in chewing. "No! No! Nothing more!" is sufficient to end his teasing for additional feeding. The question, "Peter, do you want some catnip?" will call him almost any time to my chamber where a tin box is kept containing the fragrant herb.

Gratitude, said to be left out of cats, is certainly manifested by Peter. At the time of feeding, when his meat is placed on his paper, if I continue near him, he will cease eating, rub his head in gratitude against my hand, and then return to his food.

He often coaxes us to play ball, and some other games that he has learned, but enjoys an hour's ramble with us in the woods the best of anything.

Although Peter is no longer a fisherman, the discipline of that winter when he was an outcast has worked out for him the profitable fruit of self-reliance, and enabled him to become the aristocratic lord over his range at our end of the street, as intruding cats and dogs, who have felt the sharp weapons concealed in his great paws can testify.

But how about the heartless family at the summer resort who went back to their fashionable life in the city and left such an intelligent animal as Peter to starve?—*J. M. Durrell, in Our Dumb Animals.*

URSA MINOR AND HOW WE BECAME FRIENDS.

In 1892 I associated myself with Professor T. S. C. Lowe, who was then building the Mount Lowe Railway, near Pasadena, California, which has been and now is one of the great attractions in that State of attractions. Soon after the road began to carry passengers it was suggested that a menagerie of the fauna of the Sierra Madre range—of which Mount Lowe is an important peak—would be both educative and a source of interest to travellers. Accordingly steps were taken to collect a number of the native birds and beasts. One of the first animals brought in was a black bear cub, evidently not more than six months old, and from his ugly and vicious actions he was either mean naturally or had been badly treated by his captors. I came to the conclusion later that the latter rather than the former was the case.

At that time Professor Lowe had in his employ Jason Brown, one of the sons of John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame, and "whose soul is marching on." Jason was a kind-hearted, simple-minded man, trustworthy to a high degree and deservedly held the confidence of his employer. He was accordingly placed in full charge of the bear, and a few other animals that had either been captured, bought, or contributed to the "zoo." He fed them, provided their cages, and kept them in order.

One day I was much distressed by Jason coming to me with the thumb of his right hand seriously injured. It was badly lacerated and bleeding profusely. While giving him the needed attention I learned that Ursa Minor (as we had by common consent called the bear) had savagely seized him while he was giving him his food. Up to this time I had been so occupied that I had paid little or no attention to any of the animals, but now that Jason was temporarily incapacitated for work I undertook to feed them myself. I soon learned that some of the workmen on the mountain made it their daily practice to spend part of their lunch hour playing with or teasing the animals, and that Ursa was their especial butt, owing to his readiness to show fight and his resentment at the presence of those who teased him.

It did not take long to have an order issued imperatively forbidding all teasing of the animals under pain of instant dismissal, nor am I ashamed to acknowledge that, acting under a feeling of just resentment against those who exercised their human knowledge and freedom to tease to desperation a poor dumb captive animal, I let it be known that I would aid in his discharge from the mountain with all the force I could put behind a No. 9 shoe the cowardly wretch discovered at his mean and base enjoyment.

The result of the cessation of his daily teasings upon Ursa was almost instantaneous. Daily—three times a day—I fed him, and talked with him, letting him know as well as I knew how that, while he was in captivity (which at that time he resented and in which resentment I frankly joined), he was with those who, in future, would see that he was treated only with gentleness and kindness.

Under this régime he thrived wonderfully and soon began to reveal his natural disposition, which was gentle, playful, and responsive to the kindness of those who in any way had to do with him.—*George Wharton James, in "Our Dumb Animals."*

GOOD WORD FOR THE CAT.

The comparisons which are sometimes drawn between the merits of the cat and the dog, as if we could only bestow a limited friendship on one or the other of them, are (to me) very odious, especially as the contrast seems usually designed to depreciate the merits of the less-favored cat. But why can we not appreciate both? Or, if we must feel a partiality for either, can we not see that it is but a personal, individual preference, and not an absolute one? On this understanding I would say a good word for the much-maligned, ill-used cat.

How well we know all the stock phrases by which the cat is disparaged! The cat, forsooth, loves places and not people. The cat cares only for her own comfort, and is not sufficiently grateful for kindness bestowed on her, whereas the dog is man's faithful friend and follower. The real difference, I take it, between cat and dog is this. The dog has become a wholly artificial and civilized animal, having been for centuries bred to man's order and formed to meet his wants. He is a visible embodiment of gratitude and friendship, a flattering, tail-wagging testimony to the exceeding goodness and nobility of the human race. The cat, on the other hand, is less plastic and compliant, there being a feral element in her nature which has not lent itself so readily to the shaping hand of man. She is more obstinate, more independent, more self-centred. But that the cat does offer her friendship to those who possess the key of sympathy, who shall doubt? Even to propound such a question is laughable to any one who has ever really known a cat. Indeed, as Pierre Loti says, in his wonderful "Book of Pity and of Death," there is a "supreme confidence" in the way in which a cat will intrust her life and welfare to the human companion whom she loves.

The question, therefore, of preference for cat or dog simply resolves itself into this. Which sort of friendship do you prefer—the faithful, grateful, obsequious attachment of the dog, or the less accessible, less demonstrative, but not less genuine, affection of the cat? Where both are true and valuable, it is no more than a matter of individual taste and choice. For my own part I like the aloofness, the fastidious waywardness of the cat; and I think that the friendship which needs some effort for the making of it is, perhaps, better worth having than that which is offered almost ready made.

As to the statement, sometimes made by dog lovers, that the cat, being by nature a wilder animal, does not stand in such need of human protection against cruelty, it seems too absurd to call for serious refutation. I remember a countryman remarking to me, "They say a cat's not an *animal*, but *vermin*"; and I believe this view to a great extent underlies the common and wide-spread ill-treatment of cats. The real truth is more nearly expressed in the words of De Quincey, that "the groans and screams of this poor, persecuted race, if gathered into some great echoing hall of horrors, would appeal to the heart of the stoniest of our race."—*H. S. Salt, in the Animal's Friend.*

A TRUE INCIDENT.

A neighbor whose farm adjoins ours, writes a correspondent of the *New England Homestead*, owns a very large shepherd dog, noted throughout the neighborhood for his anything but friendly greeting of strangers and his entire devotion to his master's horses. He spends nearly all his time with them in stable and pasture.

One day this fall one of the teams had been turned out for exercise in a small field, close to the roadway from our fields to the barns. Just beyond the road lay a bundle of cornstalks which had fallen from one of the loads brought up the day before. The horses saw it and wanted it, as was evidenced by their longing glances and the stretching of their heads over the fence in a vain endeavor to reach it.

Prince, who had gone down to the field to see his friends, stood watching them closely. Presently he trotted off down the field to where one of the fence boards had become loose and dropped down at one end. Slipping through, he went back to the bundle of stalks, seized it, and, dragging it along to the hole in the fence, pulled it through, having considerable trouble with it in so doing, and finally placed it before the horses, who at once began eating it. Prince stood by, panting, wagging his bushy tail, and evidently highly pleased with the whole performance.

"If there wasn't thought and reasoning there, I don't know where you'd find it!" said one of our men, who had been an interested spectator.—*American Primary Teacher.*

GOVERNMENT CATS.

Some three hundred and odd cats are maintained by the United States government, the cost of their support being carried as a regular item on the accounts of the Post-office Department. These cats are distributed among about fifty post-offices, and their duty is to keep rats and mice from eating and destroying postal matter and canvas sacks. Their work is of the utmost importance wherever large quantities of mail are collected, as, for example, at the New York post-office, where from 2,000 to 3,000 bags of mail matter are commonly stored away in the basement. Formerly great damage was done by the mischievous rodents, which chewed holes in the sacks, and thought nothing of boring clear through bags of letters in a night. Troubles of this sort no longer occur since the official pussies keep watch. Each of the postmasters in the larger cities is allowed from $8 to $40 a year for the keep of his feline staff, sending his estimate for "cat meat" to Washington at the beginning of each quarter.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

(Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, 45 Spring Lane, Canton, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.)

I.

A SHAKESPERIAN ROMANCE.

1. Who were the lovers in this romance?
2. What was their courtship like?
3. What was her answer to his proposal?
4. Of whom did he buy the ring?
5. What time of the month were they married?
6. Who gave the reception?
7. In what kind of a place did they live?
8. What caused their first quarrel?
9. What was her disposition like?
10. What was his chief occupation after marriage?
11. What did they give each other?
12. What did their courtship prove to be?
13. What did their home life resemble?
14. What Roman ruler brought about a reconciliation?
15. What did their friends say of their marriage?

—*Selected.*

II.

ACROSTIC.

All the words contain the same number of letters. When rightly guessed and written one below the other, the diagonal beginning with the upper left-hand letter and ending with lower left-hand letter will spell the name of a famous navigator connected with a holiday in October.

1. One of the States of the American Union.
2. The cup-bearer of Jupiter.
3. A country of Europe.
4. A village near Quebec.
5. The great stone monuments of Egypt.
6. A noted German writer of plays.
7. A Roman statesman.
8. A large group of islands off Scotland.

III.

CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. England's bright Bard.
2. Rather Blind.
3. Wit Meets Tenderness.
4. Judgment Killed.
5. Modern Apostle.

—*Selected.*

IV.

SQUARE.

1. A president of the United States.
2. An extent of surface.
3. Anxiety.
4. Sharp to the taste.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

I. CHANGED INITIALS.—1. Buck–Luck. 2. Object–Abject. 3. Cattle–Battle. 4. Ire–Ore. 5. Care–Rare. 6. Bean–Dean. 7. Odd–Add. 8. Bear–Year. Labor Day.

II. BEHEADINGS.—1. Dale–ale. 2. Price–rice. 3. Kedge–edge. 4. Park–ark. 5. Roar–oar.

III. LITERARY CONTEST.—Freckles, Ivanhoe, Lost Farm Camp, Through Trackless Labrador, The Tent Dwellers, Hunting with the Eskimos, The Norwegian Fjords, In Northern Labrador, White Mountain Trails.

IV. DOUBLE CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.—Boutwell, Brackett.

V. SOBRIQUETS.—1. Gustavus Adolphus. 2. Jesus Christ. 3. Joan of Arc. 4. Oliver Cromwell. 5. Marshal Ney.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins, or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

HEREAFTER, ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, INTENDED FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, "THE CHAIRMAN, MRS. GEORGE G. SAVILLE, 25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS." THIS INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTIONS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS, REQUESTS FOR DISCONTINUANCE, BEGGING LETTERS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OR BRANCHES.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The regular monthly meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held Friday, November 1, at 10.30 A.M. at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Walter G. Leith, 6 Ashton Place, Cambridge, Mass.

The Home Study Work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to help those who wish to improve their education. Lessons will be given in all subjects which can be taught by correspondence, such as Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Algebra, all branches of English, History, Botany, Geography, Languages, Drawing, etc.

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 5 Alveston Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Please make checks payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

In sending subscriptions for the *Cheerful Letter*, address The Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Subscriptions, 50 cents a year.

Chairman of Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. George G. Saville, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.